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AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 13 May 1976, at 11 a.m.

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| Chairman: | Mr. AMERASINGHE | Sri Lanka |
| later: | Mr. JOEWONO | Indonesia |

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The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

CONVENING OF A CONFERENCE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that a meeting of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean had been held on the previous day. Representatives of China and Japan had attended the meeting; of the other great Powers and major maritime users invited, only Sweden had sent a representative. He had circulated to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee copies of the statement he had made at that meeting, in which he had suggested that attention should be focused on the six points mentioned in operative paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 3468 (XXX) if progress was to be made. The consultations among the littoral and hinterland States had not yet been completed and it would be useful if the Ad Hoc Committee could consider the six points and make tentative proposals to stimulate further discussion among those States.

2. Mr. ARAIM (Iraq) said he had been instructed by his Government to state that Iraq wished to renew its invitation to host the conference on the Indian Ocean in Baghdad in 1977.

3. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Ad Hoc Committee should proceed by discussing the six points he had mentioned one by one to see if it could give any guidance to the littoral and hinterland States. The first point was "Purposes of the conference". If he heard no objection he would take it that the Ad Hoc Committee agreed that the main purpose of the conference would be to achieve progress towards the practical implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

4. It was so decided.

5. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the second of the six points, said that the date and duration of the conference would clearly depend on the progress made with the preparations. He suggested that the Committee should take up the fourth point, namely the agenda of the conference. The first suggested agenda item, "Measures to create conditions of security in the area", referred to one of the main purposes of the Declaration, because as long as conditions enabled the great Powers to compete in setting up military facilities in the region, tension there was likely to increase. The States of the region also had to contribute to creating conditions of security, since it would not be enough to banish the presence of the great Powers from the region. With regard to the second suggested item, "Delimitation of the zone and definitions of the principal ideas falling within the Declaration", some tentative definitions had already been suggested. On the third suggested item, "General assessment of the extent of great Power military and naval presence in the Indian Ocean", there had been some disagreement as to whether certain facilities constituted foreign military bases or were of a different nature. The question of definitions would be very important to the consideration of the fourth suggested item, "Elaboration of measures for achieving the elimination of all foreign military bases conceived in the context of great Power rivalry and a

(The Chairman)

reduction of their military and naval presence conceived in the context of great Power rivalries with a view to its eventual elimination". The fifth suggested item was: "A system of collective security without military alliances". The sixth and seventh suggested items: "Regional co-operation in all fields, and not necessarily in the field of security alone" and "Procedures for implementing such measures to establish a zone of peace" referred to the development of relations of understanding and amity in order to promote other measures of collective security, for example through alliances.

6. Mr. MULYE (India) said his delegation agreed that further consultations were needed with regard to the conference on the Indian Ocean. However, not many countries seemed prepared to take part in informal consultations; if the replies received and statements made were analysed, it could be seen that only about half the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean had indicated their positions. His delegation also agreed that the Ad Hoc Committee should make its views known so as to provide guidance for the deliberations of the littoral and hinterland States. The six points mentioned by the Chairman should be considered together, since the venue and the date and duration of the conference would depend on such questions as the purposes of the conference and the agenda, which were the two most important issues. His Government had already submitted its own observations on the subject. His delegation believed that the main purpose of the conference would be to provide an acceptable framework for initiating consultations with the great Powers. His delegation would not be in a position to go beyond what was stated in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. It therefore could accept only the suggested agenda items 3, 4 and 7.

7. Mr. RASOLONDRAIBE (Madagascar) said that his delegation agreed with the Indian delegation that further consultations and an exchange of ideas on the different points contained in the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace were essential. With regard to the agenda of the conference, his delegation was concerned that the Chairman's statement at the previous day's meeting of the littoral and hinterland States made no mention of the possibility of arriving at some kind of treaty at the conference. There was not much point in seeking definitions of various terms if they were not to be embodied in a treaty. The conference should also discuss General Assembly resolution 3472 (XXX) on the comprehensive study of the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all its aspects and General Assembly resolution 3477 (XXX) on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South Pacific. He noted that there was a difference in the treatment of the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific as zones of peace and considered that the Committee should try to co-ordinate its activities with the activities of the countries concerned in the denuclearized zone of the South Pacific. That proposal was informal, since the Committee's mandate was limited to the Indian Ocean area.

8. The CHAIRMAN said it might be a good idea to establish a link between the discussions concerning the Indian Ocean and those relative to the South Pacific; however, the Committee should first decide what it wanted and then hope that the countries involved in the South Pacific discussions would follow its lead.

9. Mr. BAYANDOR (Iran) said the issues raised in the statement made by the Chairman at the previous day's meeting of the littoral and hinterland States warranted careful study by the Governments of all countries concerned. The Committee could perhaps make a general review of that statement and postpone more detailed consideration until its next round of talks.

10. His delegation felt that the purposes of the conference should be defined more fully than they were in the Chairman's statement. It regarded the purpose of the conference as twofold: its main function should be to adopt measures aimed at eliminating all great Power rivalry in the region, and it should also try to promote co-operation among States of the region to ensure security in the area. Those two aims should be made clear and at the preparatory level the countries involved should try to reach some measure of consensus on them.

11. With regard to the date and duration of the conference, his Government had suggested 1977 in its most recent communication. However, his delegation felt that the conference should not be convened before adequate preparations had been made, the issue of participation resolved, and some measure of consensus reached on the main objectives of the conference. He therefore reserved his delegation's position on the date of the conference. The question of duration could be considered at the preparatory stage.

12. With regard to the agenda, his delegation reserved its position on several of the suggested items. Some of the items, such as item 2, could be dealt with at the preparatory stage rather than at the conference itself, since the conference should concentrate on more basic problems. The level of participation would depend on the outcome of the preparatory work. His delegation had already indicated its preference for participation by not only the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean but by all major maritime users, if possible. However, it would not insist on that suggestion as a pre-condition for the conference.

13. Mr. Joewono (Indonesia) took the Chair.

14. Mr. OXLEY (Australia) said that his delegation largely agreed with the views expressed by the delegation of India. As could be seen from the replies sent in by his Government, Australia was very concerned about the need for adequate preparations for the conference and also about the need to achieve a measure of consensus before the conference; past experience had shown that it was essential to achieve consensus on some issues if a conference was to be successful. His delegation was anxious to see the adoption of measures leading to the realization of the aims of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and regretted that so few littoral and hinterland States had replied to the communications from the Chairman. Something had to be done to encourage other States to respond. However, there seemed to be agreement in the Committee that adequate preparations for the conference were necessary.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that he could perhaps renew his personal efforts to encourage the littoral and hinterland States which had not yet done so to reply to his communications.

16. Mr. VANDERGERT (Sri Lanka) said that with regard to the question of participation in the conference his delegation felt it was necessary to find a formal definition of the term "littoral and hinterland States".

17. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee could try to agree on a definition of the term "littoral and hinterland States" in consultation with the group of littoral and hinterland States.

18. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to study further his statement with regard to the conference on the Indian Ocean.

19. It was so decided.

20. Mr. MULYE (India) asked whether the Committee would make further efforts to encourage representatives of the great Powers to attend its meetings.

21. The CHAIRMAN said that letters of invitation were to be sent to the great Powers and major maritime users.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.